

FREE

Spire Newsletter



NEWS FROM THE PARISHES OF
GREAT AYTON WITH EASBY &
NEWTON UNDER ROSEBERRY

Issue no.8 : December 2025



CHRISTMAS IS COMING !

BUT FIRST IT'S ADVENT

Advent - the 'coming' - marks the *Beginning of the Church's Year* and is a time for reflection when we consider the four themes - important to us all - of hope, peace, joy, and love, and love, in order to prepare for the true message of Christmas.

Purple is the traditional colour used in Advent. Advent falls at the darkest time of the year, and the natural symbols of darkness and light are powerfully at work throughout Advent and Christmas.

On Advent Sunday (30th November at 4 pm in Christ Church) we shall hold our **CHRISTINGLE SERVICE**, particularly enjoyed by the children of our village.



A Letter from Rev Sarah:

Dear Friends and Neighbours



This edition of Spire is set to cover Advent and Christmas; December and January in calendar terms. For many people, thanks to advertising and retail needs, Christmas starts straight after Halloween and finishes when the shops shut on the 24th; then it's all about the New Year and Summer holidays.

Advent seems to have sadly been lost along the rush ahead to Christmas yet begins the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day; this year it is Sunday 30th November.

Advent is a time of preparation and anticipation, a time of waiting, hoping and focussing on the coming birth of the Christ-child. It is a great season to focus on our own spiritual growth, perhaps marking out some time of quiet, as well as spending time in prayer and scripture. If we can find the space to step back from all the gift buying or preparation of an unattainably perfect table setting, we can then leave space to dwell and ponder on the true gift of Christmas. The best present ever is not matching pyjamas or an expensive piece of electronics; the pyjamas never really last that long, and the electronic device will soon date and become obsolete.

The greatest gift of **Christmas** came wrapped in pieces of linen and was laid in an animal's feeding trough by his mother Mary. God sent Jesus, his beloved son, as the long-promised Messiah to bring hope, joy and peace in a world that needs it more than ever. Advent takes us through the readings and music set for this time to help point to the Messiah, the light of the world coming to live with us in the darkness and mess.

Christmas, that begins on the evening of the 24th December, runs through to the end of January, merging into Epiphany. **Epiphany** is the feast that reminds us of the visit of the Magi who came to worship the new King and that shows the new baby was good news for everyone in the world. Often Christmas is seen to be finished by 26th December, but this baby is a big deal. The story of Christmas is not just for Christmas; it makes a difference each and every day. In all the twinkling lights and the Christmas cards depicting the star there is at the heart of it the message of good news and hope: that God is present and his promises are constant. The Christmas story is as relevant today as it has been for two thousand years.

My prayer is that this Advent and Christmas you may share in the same hope and joy of the Christ-child, for his coming was the incarnation of God's light amidst every winter's darkness. I pray too that we may all have a truly happy Christmas and real hope and joy in the New Year.

Blessings Sarah

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The anniversary of Jesus' birth has inspired the many joyful customs and traditions that we use to mark Christmas. Many of these - carols, cribs, decorations, and special foods - are shared with and enjoyed by millions of people across the world. But there is more than tinsel, trees and reindeer. There is amazement, wonder and joy here.

Do come and share it with us at one of our Christmas services.

SPECIAL SERVICES & EVENTS in DECEMBER

SUN 30th Nov at 4.00 pm Christingle Service and Posada Christ Church

30th Nov onwards Memory Tree in Christ Church (see below)

MON 1st Dec at 2.00 pm Coffee Lounge Carol Service (with refreshments)

SAT 6th Dec at 7:30 pm Angrove Singers Christmas Concert

SUN 14th Dec at 4.00 pm Cafe Church, Carols and Communion

TUES 16th Dec at 9:45 am Little Fishes Marwood School Nativity & Party
at 7.30 pm Candlelit Carol Service in All Saints

THURS 18th Dec at 7.30 pm St Oswald's Carol Service (with refreshments)

FRI 19th Dec at 10.00 am Schools Carol Service at Christ Church
at 7.00 pm Carols on High Green

SUN 21st Dec at 11.00 am All Age Christmas Nativity at St Oswald's
at 6.00 pm Service of Lessons & Carols Christ Church (refreshments)

WED 24TH DEC at 2.00 pm Christ Church COFFEE LOUNGE COMMUNION
at 4.00 pm Christ Church CRIB SERVICE
at 9.00 pm St Oswald's CHRISTMAS COMMUNION
at 11.00 pm Christ Church MIDNIGHT MASS

THURS 25TH DEC at 8.30 am BCP COMMUNION Christ Church
at 9.30 am PARISH COMMUNION Christ Church

SUN 28th Dec at 9:15 am Parish Communion at Christ Church
(28th Dec there is NO 8 o'clock Holy Communion)

WED 31st Dec at 10.00 am BCP Holy Communion at Christ Church

Services in January will be at the usual times

4th Jan we will celebrate the Epiphany

24th Jan at 2 pm in Christ Church Auction of surplus presents (see below)

25th Jan at 9:15 we welcome to Christ Church Methodist Minister Rev Rob Weir as our preacher during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

THINKING OF OTHERS THIS CHRISTMAS?

Over the Christmas period contributions and collections at some of our major church services are donated to our **CHRISTMAS APPEAL**.

This year St Oswald's has decided that we will be giving the proceeds of our Christmas services to **THE GENESIS PROJECT**. The project is based in Grove Hill in Middlesbrough. It seeks to provide a safe place for children away from their chaotic homes where their families often have major problems. The work is crucial all year long but, at Christmas, many things we take for granted are, for others, far out of reach. The annual **AUCTION OF SURPLUS PRESENTS**, to be held on 24th January at 2 pm in Christ Church will also send its proceeds to this project.

Meanwhile Christ Church proposes to centre its Christmas Appeal on **TEESSIDE HOSPICE** in Linthorpe, which offers support and specialist care and guidance to people and their families who are or have been affected by terminal illness.

SO PLEASE GIVE WHATEVER YOU CAN



from Pieter Bruegel the Elder
Mary & Joseph arrive in Bethlehem

'POSADA' (Spanish for 'inn') has been a tradition in Mexican villages for over 400 years; there they welcome into their homes for one night actors taking on the role of Mary and Joseph.

Will you welcome Mary & Joseph to stay overnight in your home? For several years we've organised a Posada in our village where small figures of Mary and Joseph travel around different households and stay for one night.

Their journey begins at our Christingle service and ends at our Crib service. It's open to everyone, and lots of families find it's a great way to be involved in the Christmas story. Sign up on the form in church.



OUR MEMORY TREE will be in church throughout Advent and Christmas for everyone to add a prayer in memory of a loved one.

Tags are available for you to write your loved one's names and a few words if you wish. At the end of the Christmas season we will have a simple gathering to pray together when the tree is taken down.

Christ Church Christingle Service

If you're able come and help make the Christingles on Saturday 29th November at 3pm in the hall.

Our beautiful Christingle service will be at 4pm on Sunday 30th November. All welcome.



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WE WILL
REMEMBER
THEM

A BIG THANK YOU

FROM ALL IN OUR VILLAGE TO THOSE WHO CREATED – AS USUAL – A SUPERB AND VERY FITTING DISPLAY OF POPPIES ROUND OUR WAR MEMORIAL THIS YEAR.



AFTER THE VILLAGE'S REMEMBRANCE SERVICE ON 9TH NOVEMBER...

...our young flag-bearers joined Rev Sarah Cliff and Rev Jon Dean along with the Methodist Minister, Mr Rob Weir, and the Deputy Lord-Lieutenant for North Yorkshire, Mr Peter Scrope outside Christ Church.

FAMILIES & YOUNG PEOPLE ARE STRONG STRANDS ACROSS OUR CHURCHES

At Christ Church there's **Little Fishes** every Tuesday morning in term time – when over 15 pre-school children and their adult carers gather in church. Folk begin arriving from 9:15 and singing begins at 9:45 with the ever-popular 'Our God is a great big God' - at the insistence of some of our pre-schoolers! After our story time, singing, dancing and praying, it's time for refreshments and play in the Coffee Lounge.

Café Church is a twice monthly opportunity to meet together with people of all ages to worship God and think about what it means to be a follower of Jesus in everyday life. We start with Cake and Conversation from 4pm and have lively family-friendly worship from 4.30pm. Children and Young people are not a token part of this community but play a full part in worship, whether it is reading, flag waving or discussing with adults what they understand about God, his Word and his World. At 5pm we have teaching in groups. Ages 2-7 have tea and a Bible story video. Older Children (Year 3-6) and Young People (Year 7-10) meet in two groups with youth leaders from 'Big Kids'. Older teenagers and adults stay in the Church Hall for Bible teaching and much appreciated discussion on how this teaching applies to their day to day lives. This month we are looking at the Fruits of the Spirit – Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control!

We continue to have **Sunday School** during many of our 9:15 Sunday Services led by Drew, **Bell Ringing** on Sunday mornings and for weddings organised by Elsa, **Serving, Singing and Eco Group** opportunities, and at Newton we have a monthly **All Age Family Service** on the 3rd Sunday each month.



WHAT DO OUR PARENTS HAVE TO SAY? Lindy (storyteller in photo) says, '**Little Fishes** is a real highlight of the week for both my children and me. The volunteers who run it are wonderful — their dedication and warmth make it such a welcoming and special community group. They truly embody the "Great" in Great Ayton.'

Anna (right) 'I love coming to **Café Church**, it's such a special time to gather with people from all kinds of churches in our local area. The uplifting songs, meaningful worship, and open discussions about how the Bible speaks to modern life makes it truly inspiring. It's also wonderful to see children taking part in prayers and enjoying their own Bible learning. We're so blessed to have **Café Church** as part of our worship calendar.'



Hannah 'We love coming to the **All Age Service** (at St Oswald's) as it offers moments for all, with a warm welcoming congregation in a beautiful little church.'

And some of our younger **Café Church** members:

Ben 'I like **Café Church**. I like waving the flags with my friends.'

Olly (pictured) 'I love it because it's a time of coming together and celebrating who Jesus really is and how God values us. I also thank the Lord for the delicious cakes everyone makes.'

Chloe 'I like to meet new people. I like being able to get closer to God.'



ALL ARE WELCOME AT ALL OUR SERVICES - DO COME ALONG AND SEE.

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CHRIST CHURCH VISITORS GROUP CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

The Christ Church Visitors Group was established in November 2005 in an attempt to reduce the burden on a very over-stretched Vicar. Today there are 15 Visitors including three original members. Since the group was first started they have been in contact with 198 people who have some link to Great Ayton but people do not have to have a connection with the church.

Sometimes visiting is just for a short time - for instance, following a stay in hospital until someone is able to return to church. More often they visit the elderly or housebound in their own homes or Care Homes. These have been in Northallerton, Catterick, Nunthorpe and Guisborough and are very often long term so that lasting friendships are formed.

Over the years they have hosted several Praise and Party events with an afternoon service followed by a tea. Transport was provided for those needing it and a box of sandwiches and cakes taken to those who were housebound.

At present a small group of Visitors helps with transport and refreshments at the Coffee Lounge Communion services. They continue to meet regularly with the clergy so that they can monitor visits and they review their guidelines annually updating

Angrove Singers Christmas Concert

Saturday 6th December 2025 7.30 pm

Christ Church, Gt Ayton, TS96AB



Musical Director: Jeremy Harbottle
Accompanist: Gillian Ash

Tickets: £12 (Adult) £5 (U18/Student)
From Thompson's Hardware, choir members,
ring Barbara 01642 941 732
or on the door (Cash or Cheque)

Seasonal refreshments included
Donations to Charity from the Proceeds

A MUSICAL CHRISTMAS GIFT

An invitation from Andrew Blair, our organist and choir master

As we turn towards Advent and Christmas, the choir is starting to prepare for the **Services of Lessons and Carols** at Christ Church (Sunday 21st Dec at 6pm) and St Oswald's (Thursday 18th Dec at 7.30pm). We have a tradition of inviting former choir members, family members and friends to join us over Christmas and, if you'd like to join us for a sing for one or both of these special seasonal services, please do come and have a word or drop me an email on blair37@btinternet.com. Singing as part of a group is hugely rewarding and there's some lovely music to get to know amongst a friendly group of supportive singers. Please also spread the word to anybody you know who may want to give and receive the gift of music.

OUR REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES

Christ Church, Great Ayton

Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion
9:15am Parish Communion
4:00pm for 4.30pm Café Church
(2nd & 4th Sundays)
Monday 2.00pm Coffee Lounge Communion
(1st Monday)
Tuesday 9.45am Little Fishes (not school holidays)
Wednesday 10.00 Holy Communion (BCP)
or Morning Prayer

St Oswald's, Newton under Roseberry

Sunday 11.00 Holy Communion with hymns
(1st & 5th Sundays)
All Age Service (3rd Sunday)

NEW CONTACT DETAILS

Rev Sarah Cliff 07355 711010

sarah@christchurchgreatayton.onmicrosoft.com

For events and bookings:

Church Office: 01642 722665

gapo1876@outlook.com

For Safeguarding issues:

Mary Mason 07788643930

mary.mason@gmx.co.uk

Church website address:

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

Our Facebook pages

Christ Church, Great Ayton;
St Oswald's, Newton under Roseberry;
All Saints Church, Great Ayton;
Christ Church Choir, Great Ayton

Little Fishes have a Private Group on Facebook for parents and carers of pre-school children; you can request to join it.

The Adult Discipleship Group also has a Private Group.

Note that the church will be gradually moving our information from our former **website** to the above national CoE site.

Sincere thanks are due to all the contributors of the above articles and to our photographers, and to Rev Geoff Jaques. The next issue of this *Spire Newsletter* is planned for the end of January in order to anticipate February and the season of Lent. If you would like to submit an article, news or details of events likely to interest our readers or merely offer suggestions for future possible issues, you are welcome to send them to the editor, Stephen Whitehead, at: stephen.whitehead1948@gmail.com. The closing date for the next issue will be 15th January 2026.